

Application No. 10/662,892

Filed: 9/15/03

TC Art Unit: 2812

Confirmation No.: 1170

REMARKS

Claims 9 and 19 have been amended to obviate the rejections thereof under 35 U.S.C 112.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 11 and 15-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oishi (5,108,178) in view of Aoki.

Oishi relates to an atomic absorption spectrometer for the measurement of Al and Cu in human serum (Col. 2, line 1-15). A filter is used to remove particles that might cause inaccuracies in the measurement. The filter in Oishi does not relate to the filtering of a gas flow in a semiconductor processing system. One skilled in the art of filtering contaminants in semiconductor processing equipment such as a photolithography tool would not look to Oishi as to how to address such a problem. Aoki refers to the use of anode water to remove contaminant and to the use of an atomic absorption spectrometer, but does not relate to the use of a gas flow collection device as recited in the claims.

As recited in the amended claims, contaminants in semiconductor processing systems frequently include both lower and higher molecular weight compounds as described in the present application at pages 5-6, for example. The present invention recites a filter that filters both of these contaminants but at

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different rates. This makes it possible to monitor the status of the filter based on this difference. Where a saturation capacity is reached for a low molecular weight compound, this contaminant will break through the filter whereas the high molecular weight compounds will continue to be trapped by the filter, for example. Claim 8 relates to the use of a collection device that has a surface property of an optical element. Glass spheres is an example of such a material. It thereby becomes possible to measure contamination of the system optics. The Tokunaga reference fails to disclose or suggest such a device.

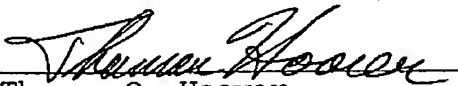
As the cited references fail to disclose or suggest the claimed systems for a photolithography tool, reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

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The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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